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**TRUCKER THAT TRANSPORTED CARGO K-MART NEVER ORDERED -
TONS OF MARIJUANA - FINED \$10 MILLION BY U.S. JUDGE**

JAMES B. COMEY, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that an Oklahoma trucking company, COLEMAN COMMERCIAL CARRIER, INC., was sentenced late yesterday in Manhattan federal court by United States District Judge LEWIS A. KAPLAN for its participation in a nationwide drug-smuggling ring that shipped thousands of pounds of marijuana aboard tractor trailer trucks from November 1998 through September 2001, from Los Angeles, California, to New York City, Jessup, Maryland, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for resale. Judge KAPLAN sentenced COLEMAN COMMERCIAL CARRIER to a fine of \$10 million, the statutory maximum.

The Government convicted COLEMAN COMMERCIAL CARRIER and one of its supervisors, CARL COLEMAN, on September 23, 2002, after a week-long jury trial. The evidence at trial demonstrated

that beginning in 1997, CARL COLEMAN, and others, began using his family's trucking business to transport thousands of pounds of illegal shipments of marijuana across the country. COLEMAN concealed the marijuana behind legitimate loads of cargo, which were being carried for companies like K-Mart. The evidence at trial further demonstrated that in connection with certain of these illegal shipments, CARL COLEMAN manipulated the seals on the trailer locks in order to hide the fact that he had tampered with the trailer's cargo.

The Government also established at trial that as part of this illegal operation, CARL COLEMAN, and others, regularly changed the name of the trucking business in order to avoid suspicion following seizures of marijuana shipments. The names used by COLEMAN included: ACE International, CCC International, and, ultimately, COLEMAN COMMERCIAL CARRIER, INC.

During the trial, the Government established that from at least 1997 through December 1998, CARL COLEMAN and others transported large shipments of marijuana to a Maryland drug dealer. In order to facilitate the transportation of these illegal shipments, the Coleman Organization leased warehouse space at 8350 Bristol Court, Suite 112, Jessup, Maryland. On December 7, 1998, the DEA seized approximately 3,000 pounds of marijuana that had been unloaded at that location from a CCC International truck.

The trial evidence further demonstrated that the same Coleman drivers transporting the marijuana loads to the Maryland warehouse would occasionally transport tin cans full of cash from Maryland back to CARL COLEMAN. According to the evidence at trial, law enforcement seized approximately \$266,000 of these illegal proceeds from a CCC International truck in November 1998.

The Government also introduced evidence of numerous additional seizures of marijuana by state and federal law enforcement agents from trucks controlled by COLEMAN's organization. Specifically, in January 1998, a Pennsylvania state trooper seized approximately 240 pounds of marijuana from a CCC International truck; in March 1998, a Virginia state trooper seized approximately 2,000 pounds of marijuana from an ACE International truck; in December 2000, a Texas state trooper seized approximately 400 pounds of marijuana from a COLEMAN COMMERCIAL CARRIER truck; on May 11, 2001, a California highway patrolman seized approximately 2,000 pounds of marijuana from a Coleman Commercial Carrier truck; and on September 16, 2001, a United States Department of Transportation agent seized approximately 163 pounds of marijuana from a Coleman Commercial truck.

Mr. COMEY praised the DEA for their efforts in this case.

Assistant United States Attorneys DAVID BERARDINELLI and CHRISTOPHER CONNIFF are in charge of the prosecution.